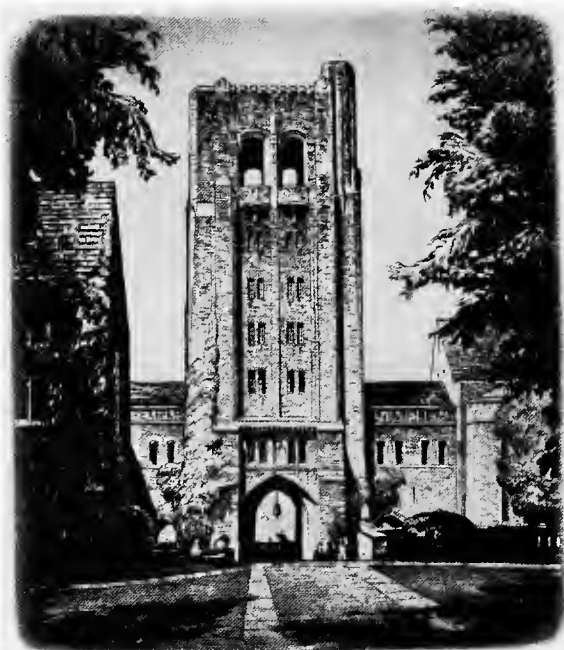


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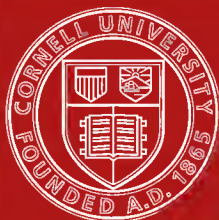
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*The
Lays of a
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*The
Lays of a
Lawyer*

by

W^m. B. McVickar.

*Emprynted at the
Pelham Press*

New York

1901



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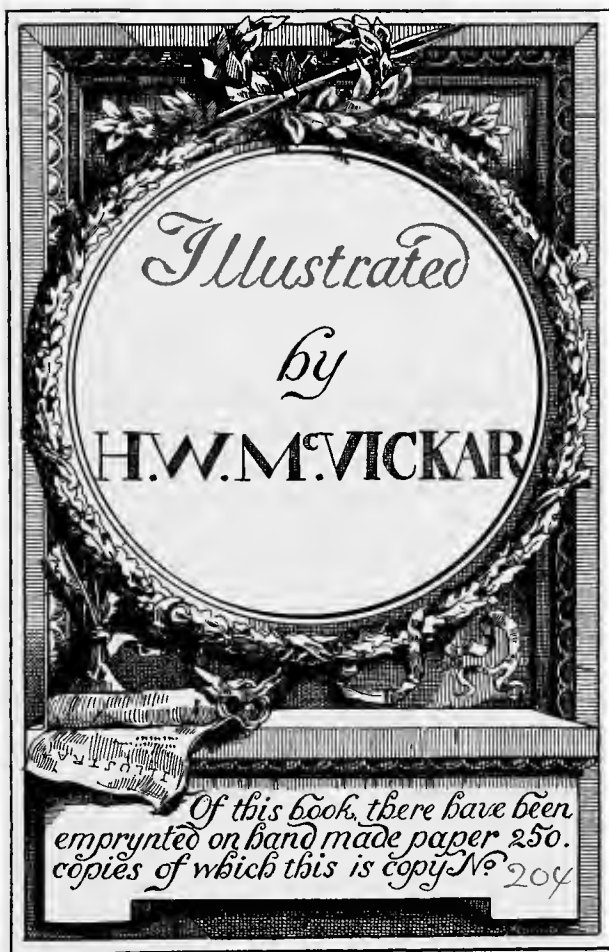
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IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM BARD MCVICKAR

BORN OCTOBER 14, 1858
DIED MARCH 30, 1901

AT THE REQUEST OF HIS FRIENDS
THESE POEMS HAVE BEEN COLLECTED
AND ILLUSTRATED BY HIS BROTHER





H.W.M. Vickar

Acknowledgment is made
to the Editors of "The
Century," "Life"
and "Puck"



INTRODUCTION



*OME one more versed in
books than I
Has something more than
hinted
I ought to give a reason why
This little book is printed ;*

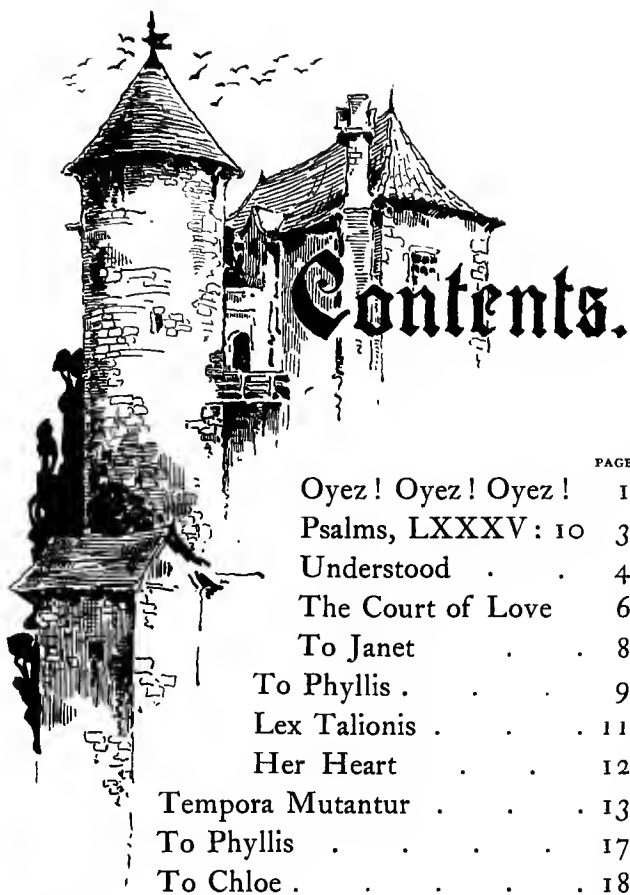
*And that 'tis hard to do—it hath
No bearing on the season ;
It was not writ for love, or wrath,
Or other obvious reason ;*

*It hath no lesson to impart ;
It solves no social question ;
Its pathos may not reach the heart,
Its laughter help digestion ;*

*Yet if one verse within it finds
A sympathetic dimple
Or if it prove to laymen's minds,
That lawyers can be simple,*

*Why then I'd hold its work well done
Though further praise be stinted,
For after all 'tis half for fun
This little book is printed.*





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OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ!



H, hear ye, hear ye, hear ye, all
Ye that have business referred
To this Honorable Court from hovel
or hall
Draw near and ye shall be heard;

Ye damsels for Thomas the groom
who sigh,
Ye lovers of Lady de Vere.
Ye dandies enchained by a dairy
maid's eye,
Ye sweethearts and swains draw near;

For this is the Court of his Majesty Love,
From which there lies no appeal,
Where weighty decrees are given above
A heart by way of a seal;

Where fines are paid in kisses and sighs,
Where fetters are woven of hair,
Where oaths are always supposed to be lies,
Where everything wrong is fair;

So then to the bar of this Honorable Court
Let every one, sinner or saint,
Whatever her sex or his station resort
Alleging their cause of complaint.



PSALMS, LXXXV : 10

“ Mercy and Truth are met together :
Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.”



N charitable errand bent
Prue met a legal youth,
And said to him with arch intent :
“ Lo, Mercy, sir, and—Truth ? ”

He answered her in such a way,
That she will never cease
To wonder if he meant to say :
“ No, Righteousness and Peace ! ”



UNDERSTOOD

LOVED a maiden once as well
As she was passing fair,
And that is more, the truth to tell,
Than now to love I'd care;
And she would let me kiss her hand,
When I'd been very good—
That is, if I would "understand."
At length I understood.

I asked her for her photograph
To light my lonely room;
She laughed a merry little laugh,
But left me to my gloom;
For that was such a "strange" demand
She did not think she could—
Because I might not "understand."
And then I understood.

I wooed her in the morning, noon,
And afternoon, and night,
I would have fetched the very moon
And stars for her delight;
She said my love was truly grand,
And that some day she would—

And hoped that I would "understand."
How well I understood !

At last I took by force of arms
The kisses she denied ;
Her dimples were her chiefest charms,
And so she never cried,
But faltered as with nimble hand
She rearranged her snood,
" I knew you wouldn't understand !"
But I *had* understood.



BRIEF FOR RESPONDENTS

STATEMENT

That in the month of May
On or about some day
Appellant took relator's heart,
and stole it quite away.

POINT I

The case is more than clear;
Intent doth well appear ;
“ Felonious taking,” please the Court, is quite
established here.

POINT II

The heart was not returned ;
Appellant claims 'twas spurned,
The evidence, however, shows, with passion
it was *burned* !

POINT III

The larceny is grand,
And, as the cases stand,
Appellant, to relator clearly forfeiting her
hand,

Should be confined for life
In bonds of "wedded strife,"
And be proclaimed to all the world as the
relator's wife.

Dan CUPID,
of Counsel.

TO JANET

WRITTEN ON THE FLY LEAF OF DE MUSSET'S
"COMEDIES ET PROVERBES"



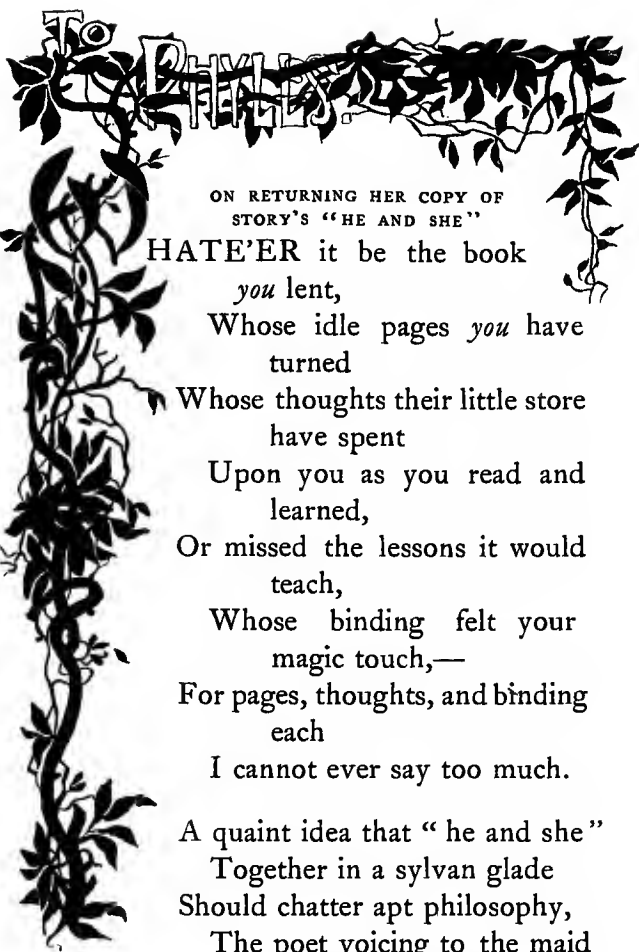
O gift of old, of ring or book,
But had a posy scrawled upon it,
But years ago the world forsook
This pretty mode, and moderns

brook

Nor chansonnette, nor sonnet;

Yet one whose eyes have met your eyes
Must hymn for very sadness
Those pools in which his reason lies,
For it mistook them for the skies,
And now lies drowned in gladness:

And if you find within these books
But tales of love's entreating,
Ah, blame not me, but blame your looks,
Which sent my reason off the hooks,
And set my heart a-beating.



ON RETURNING HER COPY OF
STORY'S "HE AND SHE"

HATE'ER it be the book

you lent,

Whose idle pages *you* have
turned

Whose thoughts their little store
have spent

Upon you as you read and
learned,

Or missed the lessons it would
teach,

Whose binding felt your
magic touch,—

For pages, thoughts, and binding
each

I cannot ever say too much.

A quaint idea that "he and she"

Together in a sylvan glade

Should chatter apt philosophy,

The poet voicing to the maid

The thoughts which tumble
through his brain

On love, on life, on death and rhymes :—
Ah, thoughts, you are so very vain !
And yet you come to all at times.—

A pretty thought that “ he and she ”
Should thus the old conclusions try
With nature, men and destiny,—
But think you not that you and I
Would sound as well ? And, ah, how sweet
To lead you to some mossy spot,
And lay me humbly at your feet
While we discuss—I care not what !

And while decision, nicely poised,
To this side, then to that inclines,
Or each decree abroad is noised
By cawing rooks among the pines,
So long as I might linger there
Afar from life's more beaten tracks
With you alone, for all I'd care,
The world might go to—Halifax !

LEX TALIONIS



STILL can see the wavy curls
That o'er her shoulders
floated.

She was the very "girl of girls,"
On whom my young heart
doted

She listened *then* with cold disdain
To all my silly speeches,
And laughed outright to find: "Dear Jane!"
Engraved on copper—beeches:

But now that in the lapse of years,
(Full nine and thirty summers)
Her hair grown thin behind the ears,
She welcometh all comers,
My hand no more I seek to link
With that, which still her own is,
And o'er my peaceful pipe I think
Upon the *lex talionis*.

HER HEART



DAINTY boudoir all scented and prim,
As neat as new wax yet crowded with
things,
With photograph albums filled to
the brim,
With patterns for skirts and for bod-
ices trim,

With powder and puffs and patches and rings ;

With note-books of gossip and scandal grim,

An accurate table of who is who,

A bundle of letters, all faded and dim.

And a rose that was given her once by *him*,

Before she jilted him—faded, too,

And this, with the mirror, is all that's there

In the heart of milady so dainty and sweet,

With perhaps just a *soupçon* of thought to spare,

Which thought need neither be novel nor rare,

But just orderly, trim and neat.

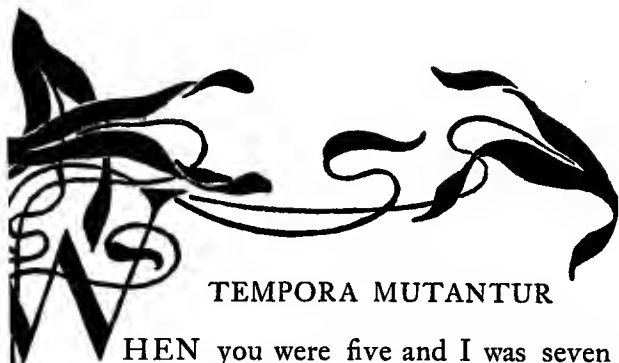
For passion must out and reason be dumb—

Such a very well ordered heart is hers—

And passion may grumble, and reason look glum

But both are well under her ladyship's thumb;

And woe to the one that demurs.



TEMPORA MUTANTUR

WHEN you were five and I was seven
We loved each other dearly ;
We kissed, it was a childish heaven
To play at lovers merely ;
Full fifteen years and more had sped,—
How swift the twelvemonths canter !
No longer we at lovers *played* ;
Ah, "*tempora mutantur* !"

For you were fairer than the flowers,
That loved to grow around you,
A thing to gaze upon for hours,
To dream about I found you,
But when I begged for childhood's kiss
You laughed in merry banter ;
As though it were conclusive, this :
"Sir, '*tempora mutantur* !'"

The times are changed, yes, Phyllis, very ;
My hair and beard are grizzled ;

'Tis hard to wait for Charon's ferry,
And think how life has "fizzled" ;
The times do change, and so do we,
But I still love you, Phyllis,
And times may change for you and me,
If love don't change "*in illis*."



TO PHYLLIS

WITH A SKETCH AND A BOX OF SWEETS

 AM very much afraid, that you know
this little maid,
Whose name I do not choose to
disclose-close-close,
As for the little man, you may guess him, if
you can,
By the funny shape and size of his nose-nose-
nose :
As he hands his little box to the maid with
curly locks
He says, while he bows: "Will you take-
take-take,
"The heart that lies inside, which you'll find is
true and tried,
"While you eat the candies up for my sake-
sake-sake?"
Says the little maid in turn: "Your heart I
must return,
"For hearts are seldom good for to eat-eat-eat,
"But the candies I will take, not for your hon-
or's sake,
"But simply for the reason that they're
sweet-sweet-sweet."

TO CHLOE

IN RETURN FOR A COPY OF DE MUSSET'S VERSES



HEN the world was young and
the heavens were new,
And the fauns and the satyrs
had nothing to do
But to bask in the sunlight,
admire the view,

And flirt with the nymph sand the graces,
'Twas then that the earth could afford to be gay,
For her children were few and not much in the
way,
And she still had some time to herself in the day
After washing their hands and their faces ;

And being just then of poetical turn—
(The author she was of the "Elm and the
Fern,"
Which she set to the tune of the soft tinkling
burn)—

By way of employing her hours
She determined her former attempts to outdo,
And to bind to her side with links forged anew
Her lover, the Sun—poetical too—

So she wrote the sweet songs of the flowers :

And, having procured a copy of these,
Selected of course, for each one agrees,
That no maiden may read whatever she please—

The reason?—I'm sure I don't know it,
I send them to you as a token to-day,
And hope that their fragrance may manage to
say

As much as your heart in the very same way,
As to mine did the lines of your poet.





'VE often mused about
your face,
Since recollection naught
implies,
For old Time changes
things apace

As onward in his course he flies,
And when on you I last set eyes
You were a little girl, you see,—
A thing that merely laughs or cries,
Chère Rosalie de Normandie :

And so I turned in thought to trace
The character which underlies
The features of our ancient race,
And all its bearings analyze,
That I might cunningly devise
The traits that should your portion be
To make you lovable and wise,
Chère Rosalie de Normandie :

I loved to picture you all grace—
The object of a lover's sighs,
Who treasures close a bit of lace,
Torn off by chance as priceless prize,
Or else in sonnets vainly tries
To praise your virtues fittingly ;—
I pictured you in such a guise,
Chère Rosalie de Normandie :

ENVOI

But since, deserting foreign skies,
You've shown your very self to me,
My fairest dreams I now despise,
Chère Rosalie de Normandie.

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST FOR
NINE VALENTINES



F old one muse the poet sung,
And must I hymn the nine?
And must I teach my rebel tongue
To ask as valentine
Nine girls, egad? No, I'll be
hung
Before I'll write a line!

TO A FIVE DOLLAR BILL

DE two, at least before you went,
Have seen the town to some
extent,
Have been out late o' nights together
In nipping and in sultry weather,
And, each to serve his private ends,
Have been, as friendship goes, good friends ;
So, Bill, in answer to these rhymes
Remembering kindly former times
Come look me up, you'll find me thinner ;
And, William, treat me to a dinner.



F·I·WERE·RICH·

F I were rich I'd have a horse,
A house that owned a stable,
My dinners should be good of course,
With claret on the table,
My china, glass and silverware
Should be beyond all cavil,
And when I needed change of air
I'd go abroad and travel :

I'd have a man to black my shoes,
I'd subsidize a barber,
My friends I sometimes would amuse
With yachting in the harbor,
I'd get up in the mornings late,
Let's say about eleven,
And dine each night at half past
eight,
And not as now at seven.

For nothing should be as it was,
If money could arrange it,
If I were rich, then just because
A thing was so I'd change it;

And, living now in single ease.

The first thing I should do, dear,
Would be to settle, if you please,
My wedding day with you, dear.

ON EDITH MASQUERADING AS DI-
ANA ON ST. VALENTINE'S DAY



AN Cupid winked his roguish eye,
His fat sides shook with laughter,
He rubbed his hands and cried:
"Oh my!

"There will be fun hereafter!"

Quoth he: "I'm laying even bets,

"Miss Dian will repent her

"Of flouting at me when she gets

"The valentine I've sent her."

It seems that he his arrows had

Exchanged for those she carried;

It grieved the tender-hearted lad

That she had never married;

"And sure," thought he, "amid the rout

"Of Tuesday's fancy dances

"If she but take an arrow out,

"'Tis odds that something chances!"

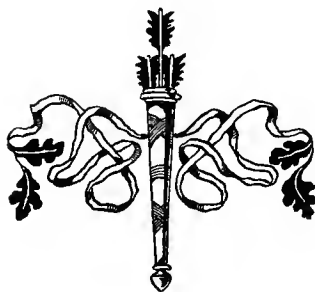
Alas, alas, she left unlatched

That quiver full of sorrows,

And she alone remains unscratched

By those almighty arrows;

So weeping sore we go our ways,
Where'er our duty leadeth,
But evermore we stop to gaze—
On Dian? —No, on Edith.



APRIL FOOL



WOULD not kiss you, if I could ;
I would not press your hand I swear :
'Twere vain t' undo your silken snood
To tempt me with your golden hair :

My arm abhors your dainty waist ;
My head upon your virgin breast,
Nor rapture can, nor comfort taste,
But sighs for pillows and for rest ;

My eyes I close and turn away,
If but an ankle steal in sight,
And to your rippling laughter gay
I shut my ears with all my might ;

And—yes, though you're the brightest miss,
That ever chattered French at school,
If you believe one word of this,
I'll laugh and call you : "April Fool" !

À M^{LE}. PHYLLIS



DANS le vieux temps il se fit
Que M. Cupidon, ma chère,
Embrassait bien à ce qu'on
dit,
Psyché qui le laissa faire—

Chérie, si tu voudrais bien
Mes tendres prières exaucer,
Cupidon auprès du mien
Rougirait de son baiser.

AUTUMNAL



THOUGH, dear, I distinctly remem-
ber,
(Many years have passed over us
since),

'Twas the bleakest of nights in December,
When my heart began first to evince,
That said heart could e'en glow like an ember,
Though till then 'twas the hardest of flints ;

And though May was the month when we
plighted
That troth, which we ever shall keep,
And the brightest of sunbeams delighted
To play with your curls at bo-peep
All that day, till worn out they alighted,
And in your two eyes fell asleep ;

'Tis when others are hunting the coon, dear,
The grouse and the partridge with zest ;
And in red and in gold and maroon, dear ;
The bushes and trees are all dressed ;
Yes, Autumn's the time when the moon, dear,
Impels me to love you the best.

A CUP OF TEA

A LITTLE note in Phyllis' hand,
As plain as plain can be,
'Tis signed with her own signet, and
It is addressed to me.

I stand and think what it can hold
Of love or coquetry
Until, my faint heart growing bold,
I open it and see.

Alas! 'tis but a mere request
"To take a cup of tea
At five o'clock," and meet her guest,
"That charming girl, Miss B."

A hundred more no doubt have learned
Of that same cup of tea—
'Tis hard where Phyllis is concerned
Just one per cent. to be!

But though my hopes have gone pell-mell,
Dissolved in mild Bohea,
I'll go and drown my woes as well
In flowing bowls of—tea.

ON A BUTTERFLY FLUTTERING OVER THE CHANCEL

SEPTEMBER 24, 1893



PSYCHE with enameled wings,
Fluttering o'er the altar fair,
Tell me what good spirit
brings
You in the house of prayer.

Emblem of the soul, you preach
Better sermon than the priest.
See how high your pinions reach!
Higher may attain the least.

Grovelling worm, than all more vile
From the chrysalis of death,
You have sought the sacred pile,
Wafted by your Maker's breath.

There with your prismatic wing,
While the priest doth prose and plod,
Showing us how fair a thing
Is the soul that worships God.

TO MY GODSON
WITH A PAIR OF SILVER SPURS



OR churls the lash, the
spurs for him,
Who, fearless, sets his
lance in rest
Against all baseness, scorns to trim,
And stands for nothing but the best.

TO MISS PUMPERNICKEL

 F your name you regret,
It is easy to change it:
'Tis futile to fret ;
If your name you regret,
I'm single as yet,
Why can't we arrange it?
If your name you regret,
Pray why don't you change it?



CHEEKY

F “*dans l’amour*
Il y a toujours,”
The proverb isn’t new,
“*L’un qui baise,*”
For so it says,
“*Et l’autre qui tend la joue.*”

It seems to me,
Ma chère amie,
The one to kiss I’d seek
To be, and so
I’d like to know
If you’ll supply the cheek.

TO DAPHNE WITH A SILVER
BONBONNIERE

 CARE not what you keep in it,
Or sweets or other things,
But pray that when you peep in it
The love I've put to sleep in it
May stretch his downy wings,
May rise and stretch his wings:

That should you ever weep in it
For joy, or grief or fear
Back may he quickly creep in it,
And snuggling close and deep in it
May drink up every tear,
May dry up every tear.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE



KISSED her 'neath the mistle-
toe!

She was so sweet, so young, so
fair,

With bright blue eyes and golden
hair,

For all I reck the world may know,
I kissed her 'neath the mistletoe.

Nor do I think she was too bold
When 'round my neck she threw her arms,
And whispered soft her quaint alarms ;
For she was only five years old,
And feared, she said, her nurse might scold.

LOVE WITH MARGINAL NOTES

I WROTE some verses on a day ;
1000 With pangs of love o'erflowing,
And left them in a careless way
Upon my desk, unknowing.

Sweet Martha enters all forlorn,
Though Richard loves her dearly :
For Dick is not to riches born—
To slender wages merely.

Ah, *can* they marry on a thou—
She sees a likely margin
About the verses that just now
I told my love at large in.

Her pretty head with figures filled—
She snatches up the paper,
And soon the items all are billed
In columns long and taper.

A pound of "mutton's 20 cents,
And 40 cents for butter."
Is scrawled across—"the love intense
My lips can never utter."

The price of coal to some extent
O'erlaps "my mistress' scorn;"
"\$500 for the rent"
Blots out—"my soul is torn!"

Sweet Martha, true and tender maid,
How well you dot and carry!
But, Martha, dear, when all is said,
Oh, *does* it pay to marry?



AUTUMN DAYS

THE leaves
have strewn
the rustling
ways,
The birds
are strangely
still ;

The mill
pond in these
autumn days

Is bleak and something chill.

And hopes which smiled through summer haze
Are dead and gone these autumn days.

A VALENTINE

February 14, 1888.



HAVE to force my pen to write,
It seems unmaidenly to sue,
Nor does the year excuse it—quite;
But then, you see, I write to you.

We women, like the ghosts of old,
Should only speak when spoken to
And some will think me all too bold
This rigid rule to break—do you?

I care not,—caution to the wind!
Howe'er this letter I may rue,
My heart shall still its comfort find
In having spoken once to you;

And so forgive me if you deem
What I have done is wrong to do,
And just in pity let me dream
That I am Valentine to you.



YOU DEAR OLD GOTHAM

YOU'VE grown a by-word
in the land
For rank corruption and
misfeasance,
For streets ill cleaned, ill
lighted, and

For many an unabated nuisance.

Naught, naught within your courts is chaste,
Except, perhaps, a recent statue ;
E'en that is far above you placed,
And frowns and points its arrow at you.

I love you for the olden days
Of Stuyvesants and Knickerbockers ;
For those of Peter Pindar's lays,
When there were fewer bells than knockers.

'T was sport to drive a sleigh and pair
When Murray Hill a wooded ridge was,
And gallants knew exactly where
A certain place called Kissing Bridge was.

Then Wall Street was a walk for sheep
 (They say that "lambs" may still be found
 there)
And lovers rendezvous would keep
 In Maiden Lane and by-paths round there ;

Those days have drifted back until
 They seem to-day like Old World fables ;
But, dear old town, I love you still,
 In spite of horse-cars, steam, and cables.

A VALENTINE



LOVE'S district messengers are
flowers,
And by this motley crew
Of roses, plucked in Klünder's
bowers,
I send my love to you.

ENTRE NOUS

AN IDYL OF THE "400," AFTER AUSTIN DOBSON

"They are neither man nor woman,
"They are neither brute nor human."
—POPE.



E are neither man nor girl,
Entre nous,
We are both in fashion's whirl,
It is true ;
But an ordinary feather
Would outweigh us both together,
Entre nous ;

As we sit down here and chatter
(For the ball room is so hot),
It seems so small a matter
Whether we exist or not
That the "world that turns about us,"
As you said,
Might better turn without us,
I'm afraid :
My neck looks well, décolleté,
My figure is not faulty,
And my gown, of rare brocade,
Is a poem among dresses ;
In short, I'm well arrayed,
But my empty heart confesses,

I'm less real than my maid,
Who is not in fashion's van ;
 As for you,
You're a parody on man,
Entre nous.

Let's discuss each other fairly ;
Entre nous,
 You must admit it's rarely,
 That we do.

For in our idle chatter
'Tis easier far to flatter,
Entre nous ;

For example, 'twas in duty,
Or at least I so suppose,
That you said my piquante beauty
Fostered envy in the rose ;
Though you scarce were sure I heard
What you swore,
And you never meant a word,
All the more,

My apathy ignoring,
Your compliments kept soaring,
Till I really found them boring,
Entre nous :

A phonograph inserted
In a doll of proper size

With machinery concerted
 To work the mouth and eyes,
 And dressed as near the fashion,
 As are you,
 Were as sensible to passion,
 Entre nous.
 As for me, my airs and graces,
 Entre nous ;
 My dresses, silks and laces,
 C'est bien tout !
 There is nothing else behind them ;
 For my feelings, my sensations,
 My heart and its temptations,
 The signs of its emotion,
 Love, hatred or devotion,
 If so you cared to do,
 You might search and never find them,
 Entre nous.

 Don't you think, if such the case is
 With us two,
 It were best to set our faces,
 Pour le coup,
 Against this bald flirtation ?
 'Tis but an irritation,
 Entre nous :
 Of course, if we were human,
 You a man and I a woman,

There might be some desire
In our hearts to play with fire ;
Or, if we both were younger,
We might "pretend" at least,
As children still their hunger
With a *papier mâché* feast ;
But beneath this calm exotic
With the lamplight glinting through
It's simply idiotic,

Entre nous !



TO MY MOTHER ON HER BIRTH-
DAY

June 20th, 1883.

OW many years ago it was
I scarcely dare to say,
But well I know that it befell
Upon this very day,
And in the month that follows close
Upon the heels of May ;

That in this State a babe was born
With golden, fluffy hair,
Who cried as if she knew it was
A world of gloomy care,
And felt that such a feeble thing
Could have no business there.

But still she lived, and in her life
Were mingled joys and woes,
The bitter coming with the sweet ;
And like her emblem rose,
She seemed the lovelier for the tear .
Which every woman knows.

Yet now this woman, having been
A blessing to us all,

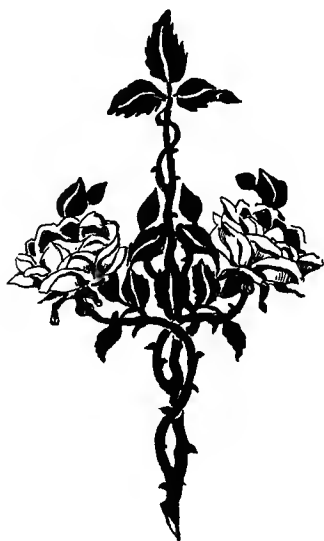
Who call her by the sweetest name
That ever man did call
Another mortal being by
Since Adam and "The Fall."

This woman thinks as once she thought,
When, being lately born,
She felt it was a cruel world,
And she the most forlorn
Of all who've been from happier climes
By ruthless parents torn.

Ah ! well it is a dismal thing—
Indeed it is !—to live,
And birth-days are the saddest days
The long year has to give,
So let us weep and catch our tears
Within some patent sieve ;

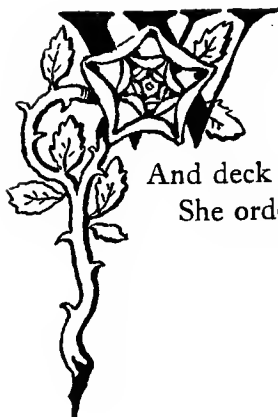
And just as long as they will stay
The patent sieve within,
Why we will be as sorrowful
As we have ever been.
But, when they're gone, what *can* we do
But dry our eyes and grin ?

So, Mother, take these fragrant flowers,
And let the drops that lie
Upon their rosy petals do
Instead of many a "cry,"
And when you really want to weep—
Why, get a sieve, and try.



TO MY MOTHER ON HER
BIRTHDAY

June 20th, 1885.



WHEN, proud of thee, the
smiling earth
Would all her joy at once
disclose,
And deck the month that saw thy birth,
She ordered June to bear the rose.

TWO PICTURES

“Look here upon this picture and on this.”—HAMLET



HE student's lamp shines
brightly
On rows of well-worn tomes,
And wreaths of smoke float
lightly
From Æschylus to Holmes;
The student's fancy wanders,
His feet are cocked on high,
O'er pleasant things he ponders,
And winks his wicked eye.



The boudoir's light is blinking
Before two eyes which seem
More brilliant to my thinking
Than Sol's most ardent beam;
Through loosened nut-brown tresses
Gleams white a shoulder bare,
And petticoats and dresses
Lie tumbled on a chair.



The student still is thinking,
His thoughts have turned awry,
And all his wicked winking
Has ended in a sigh.



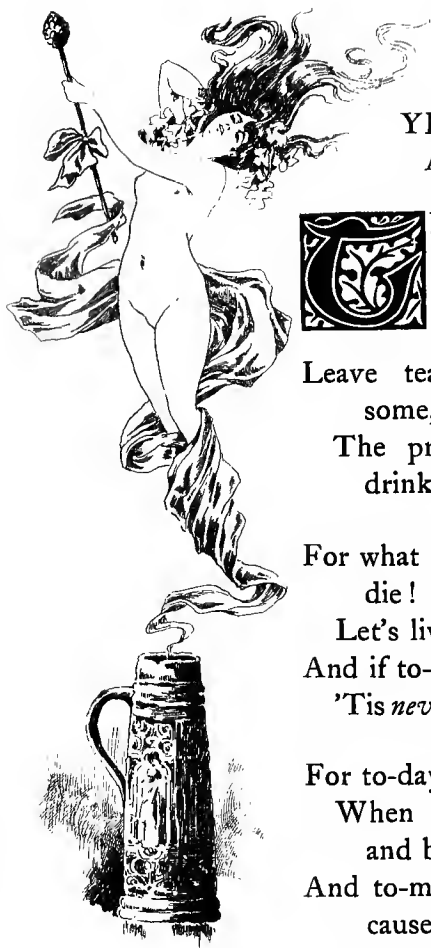
Her toilet quite perfected
The woman dreams awhile,
And in her glass reflected
Is *such* a meaning smile.



TO PRUE WITH A FAN



HE sprites and fays and elfin things
That *will* get tangled in your hair,
Though fanning madly with their
wings,
Can scarcely stir the heavy air,
But this, I hope, shall serve to lure
Some light-heeled zephyr from the West,
Whose cool-lipped kisses may insure
Your comfort while the fiddles rest.



YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND TO-MORROW



THE past be d—d! the future
will come,
Whatever we do, or say, or
think,

Leave tears to some, and prayers to
some,
The present's the time to play and
drink:

For what care we though to-morrow we
die!

Let's live to-day—so far, so good—
And if to-morrow we needs must sigh,
'Tis *never* to-morrow be't understood:

For to-day is to-day, whatever it was
When yesterday's sun burned clear
and bright,
And to-morrow is never to-morrow, be-
cause

To-day steals a march on it during the
night.

And if it be only to-morrow we die,
That we'll live forever and ever is clear;

So now, while the merry to-days go by,
Let's toss the bumper from year to year.

We don't give a hang for the future or past,
The one is gone, and the other's to come;
But the present—the present is here to last—
Be merry to-day—to-morrow be glum !



ARCADIE

T'S agreed, that when we are tired and sick
Of dinners and coaches and dances ;
That when Harry of pleasing has lost the
trick,
And ditto has happened to Frances ;
When we long for Nature, and all that's
true,
And worth the trouble of wishing ;
With a rod and a creel and a book, that you
And I shall go a-fishing ;

That we'll wander lazily down the stream
With a hamper of cold provisions ;
And that you shall sing the while I dream ;
And that Civil Procedure decisions,
And law and order and all that's dry
Shall vanish in innocent pleasure,
As your notes float up to the summer sky
In a quaint and purling measure ;

That the brook shall join in the glad refrain ;
And, when we have fished and waited,
Too happy to know that we fish in vain,
Or to care if the hook be baited,

That we'll sit us down in some grateful shade,
And that there you shall read at your ease,
dear,
And teach me to like or Browning or Praed,
Or anything else you please, dear ;

That is, when sick of the world am I,
And you of its fuss and its flutter,
That afar from the haunts of men we'll fly
With a basket of bread and butter,—
That when you are tired of being a belle,
And I of posing as clever—
“And that will be when?” you ask—oh, well,
Perhaps it is safe to say—never !

MISS AURORA BOREALIS



WITH the lazy grace of an indolent queen

She lifts her head and she
cocks her chin,

While the haughty curl of
her lip must mean

The reign of an insolent spirit within;
And she is so cold, so bitterly cold,

That I button my overcoat up to my chin,
And I shiver whenever I make so bold

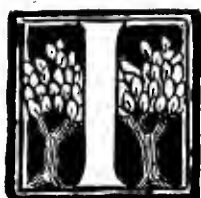
As to touch her hand, for my blood is thin.

A PLEA FOR TWO LAWLESS
TRESPASSERS *(After Sir John Denham.)*



NOT content to kiss thy cheek,
Favor meek !
For a greater boon they speak,
Burning with an amorous fire
To thy lips,
To thy lips
My lips aspire !
Where they'll feast themselves until,
If you will,
Greedily they've had their fill,
Then, with nectar drunk, excuse 'em,
When they stray,
When they stray
To thy bosom.

THE DUEL



KNEW my love was brave
as well as fair
And, chancing once with her
to differ,
Instead of gauntlets one I sent
a pair
To make my challenge seem the stiffer.

The choice of weapons thus did lie with her.

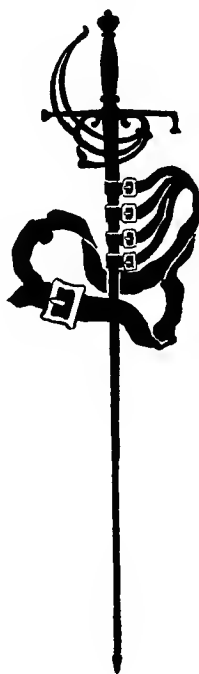
She chose the tongue, for she could use it.
To this, I own, I made no slight demur ;
(I knew at talking I should lose it!)

She called me coward, asked me what I would ;
I said : " Let's compromise the matter,
You use your tongue, and I my lips." " 'Tis
good ! "

She cried, and straight began to chatter.

I kissed her pretty lips and stopped the flow,
She pursed her rosy mouth and pouted :
" You don't fight fair ! " she cried, " for well
you know
I cannot kiss and talk." I doubted

That this her plaint she could by code sustain :
 “’Tis just,” I said, “ You can’t deny it,
That sword should fend : forsooth I’d soon be
 slain
Without a guard, my lips supply it.”



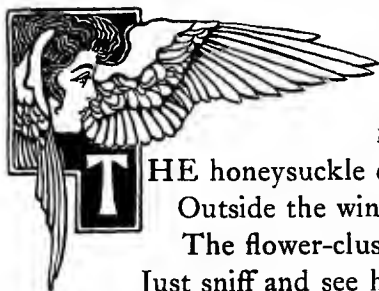
OSCULATORY



He gave me a kiss
As he told me good-bye ;
Yes, I know 'twas amiss,
He gave me a kiss,
Yet hate him for this
I can't though I try ;
He gave me a kiss
As he told me good-bye.

A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE

Dramatis Personæ



JANE MAUD
Afterward COUSIN
WALTER

MAUD

HE honeysuckle climbs about
Outside the window on the trellis,
The flower-clusters all are out—
Just sniff and see how sweet their smell is.
Come, let us go, and in the fields
We'll pass the afternoon together ;
Come, work to pleasure always yields
On days rejoicing in such weather.

JANE

No, no ; I found this coat all torn.
You know, 'tis Walter's smoking-jacket,
And there's a button—

MAUD

Oh, forlorn
Excuse !—a button !—let it lack it !
The *rent* was bad, but after all,
Dear sister Jane, why should you sew it ?
You're not a servant at his call.

Besides, 'tis odds he'll never know it.
Come, drop the nasty thing and don
Your dear old-fashioned muslin bonnet.

JANE

No; I must sew this button on.

MAUD

At window, seeing COUSIN WALTER approaching
Then go the while I work upon it.

JANE

Handing jacket to MAUD

Well, if you will, I'll run and dress,
You see the tear's already mended.

Exit JANE and enter COUSIN WALTER

After an admiring glance at MAUD's occupation
Dear Maud's an angel! I confess
I wonder why Jane's more commended.

BY REQUEST



O you wish me to write a poem for
you,
The scene to be laid in a ball-
room you say
With a heroine looking as heroines
do

When dancing they turn the night into
day,
And a hero rigged out in a clawhammer coat,
Patent leathers below, and a mull tie above?
What you wished for a theme I neglected to
note,
But presume you prefer I should sing about
love.

Here goes then—my heroine—must I define?
Or will you just turn to the glass at your side,
And by your reflection the features divine?
If you don't hit the mark you'll not go very
wide—
For her face is perfection, and as for her mind
The philosopher's stone was nothing, I
hold,
To her pretty conceits, which ever refined
The meanest of dross into purest of gold;

My hero—good lack ! *he* was nothing at all,
A commonplace every-day sort of a swain,
Just the kind of a man you might meet at a
ball,
Nor care if you never should see him again,
But, alas, the poor fellow ! he, for his sins,
Fell madly in love with this beautiful maid,
And swore to her once—here the swearing be-
gins—
That his passion was such that it never could
fade.

ENVOI

Of course you have guessed who my characters
are,
And how I've made use of your laughing
request
To tell you I love with a love that's by far
More lasting than hills, more wild than the
West.

DIABLERIE

“ When the Devil was ill, the Devil a monk would be,
When the Devil got well, the devil a monk was he.”

RABELAIS.



ENEATH the brown of his sun-
burnt cheek

The devil grew pale in the gills,—
'Tis bootless the cause of his ailing
to seek,

Perhaps he was subject to
chills,—

Be that as it may, his mustache lost
its curl,

And he looked so meagre and limp,
That Charity felt—the soft-hearted girl!—
Compelled to pity the imp :

With poultices, lotions, witch hazel, beef tea,
With soda-mint tablets and pills
She doctored the scamp, while—a wonder to
see!—

He bore like an angel his ills ;
So saintlike he seemed, that it was with relief,
(You perceive all her pity in this,)
In his coming translation she lost her belief
By his dastardly stealing a kiss.

MAN'S LOVE



HE sun rode low in the western sky,
The song of the birds grew still
As he and she came strolling by
Through the lane which led by
the mill;

“Have you heard? I’m engaged to Harry,”
said she,
While a bright smile dimpled her cheek,
And never a single word said he,
Though he seemed about to speak.

But bending low he kissed her hand
As he stifled a sob unheard,
And he left next day for a foreign strand,
Where he died and was interred—

That is, in the course of some twenty years,
In which, as it will befall,
He had cause for laughter and cause for tears,
And two good wives in all.

A REMINISCENCE



N old barn full of darkness,
 hay,
And bugs, and slugs, and
 other things
That rustle in an eerie way—
A bat's half seen and noiseless wings—
The barn door open to the sky,
 Whence shines the evening twilight
 through—
A hay mow that is not too high
 To reach with lazy ease, and—you.

ROMANCE



THROUGHOUT a plodding, dull,
prosaic life

The mem'ry of a face, a word, a
glance—

The sweet that lingers of the old romance,
With which our frolic younger days were rife.
Will still remain in spite of children, wife,
And all that in the lapse of years may chance,
And with its pretty tenderness enhance
The peace with which at first it seems at strife.

As on the pathway of the sun a cloud
Doth prove a blessing rather than a bane
When through its mists his rays empurpled
gleam,

So thought of her, we dare not name aloud
Because of plighted vows at Hymen's fane,
Still lends our life the halo of a dream.

QUID PRO QUO

AN IMITATION



ALLY, Sally, hear me through,
Once I loved no one but you,
And now, although I love
no less,
'Tis meet that I my sins confess,

Confess that though I love you still
Another shares my heart,
That of my life against my will
That other forms a part.

Blame me not then when I sip
Nectar from another's lip :
'Tis not that Sally's ceased to please,
'This not that fairer is Louise,
But since Lou's here while Sal is there,
And kissing's sweet, you know,
To kiss Louise I think is fair
If done as *quid pro quo*.

HER PARASOL

ENEATH its shade
The saucy maid
Lay sheltered from the
sun,

And thus to me :

“ Good sir,” quoth she,

“ There is just room for one.”

So down I sat,

And 'neath her hat,

Tip-tilted rowdy-wise,

It came to pass,

I lost, alas !

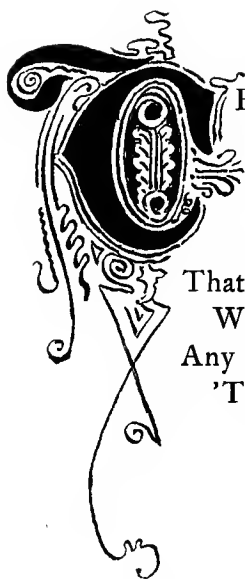
My heart within her eyes.



TO THE
DIANA ON
TOP OF MADISON
SQUARE GARDEN

Why slay'st thou not, thou glittering, stern,
Nude mistress of Endymion?
Art dazed, whichever way dost turn,
To find a staring Actæon?

CELIA'S PORTRAIT



CELIA'S portrait's passing fair,
Passing fair is Celia too,
None with either can compare
Save the other of the two.

That is why the artful minx
Will not give to begging love
Any likeness, for, she thinks,
'Twould perhaps her rival prove.



TO AMARYLLIS AT NEWPORT



KNOW a place upon the cliffs
Concealed from view of passing skiffs,
Whose very outlines, darling,
In misty clouds the fog elfs wrap.
Where we can hear the sea-dogs lap,
Or listen to their snarling :

Where no unwelcome gossip's eye
Upon our loving tryst may spy
At eve or in the morning ;
Where you and I need make no bones
O'er treating Mrs. Grundy Jones
And "*les ondits*" with scorning :

So let us meet there safe from ken,
And should I kiss you now and then
While fleecy fog-banks hide us,
As long as it were known to none
Why, very little harm were done,
Although no bonds have tied us.

JOAN

THOUGH Joan be close on sixty
year
Old age hath kissed her lightly,
A white hair there, a wrinkle here,
A step not quite so sprightly
As when in Newport years ago
She charmed me with her dancing—
They call me now, “that stiff old beau,”
But she is still entrancing.

She knows I love her and to boot
She seems to like my wooing,
Yet after forty years my suit
Is still in course of suing,
But what of that, and that my knee
Has grown too stiff to bend it.
My suit to her shall always be
Until friend Death shall end it.

EPITAPH OF A CUR



EMPER fidelis, semper idem,
Semper paratus to bark or to bite,
Sic itur ad astra, and though he was
lame,
Deo juvante, he'll get there all
right.

Semel pro semper he's gone to his rest,
His barks are all barked and finished his
work,
Peccator magnus he was at his best,
Siste viator et ora pro Turk.

TO CELIA REQUESTING A POEM
BEFORE BREAKFAST



H how for a poem at this time o' day
Can you make e'en a laughing re-
quest!

Lo the Robin still sings his matu-
tinal lay,

And his hen has not yet left her
nest,

And the worth of its birthright appears to my
soul

As slowly to life it awakes

Immeasurably less than the price of a roll

And a griddle of feathery cakes.

No, I cannot compose till the earth has been
aired,

And the birds have all taken their "dips,"

Till my maiden my coffee has deftly prepared,

And the cup has been pressed to my lips.

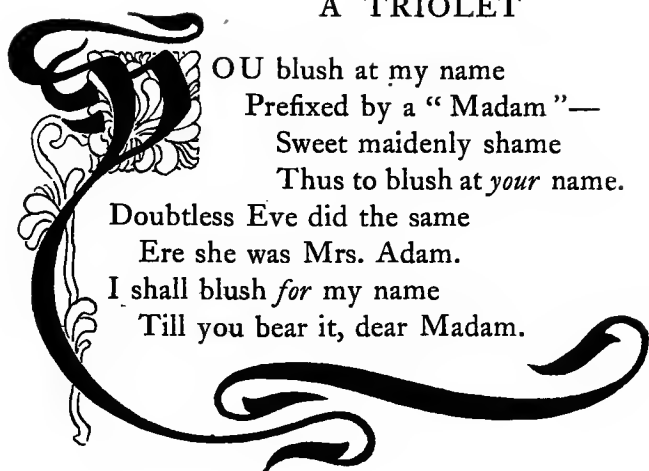
But I hope you won't find my refusal too gruff,

And will learn this at least from my scroll,

That the morning of day should be poem enough

For a girl who's possessed of a soul.

A TRIOLET



YOU blush at my name
Prefixed by a "Madam"—
Sweet maidenly shame
Thus to blush at *your* name.
Doubtless Eve did the same
Ere she was Mrs. Adam.
I shall blush *for* my name
Till you bear it, dear Madam.

TO PHYLLIS

WITH A COPY OF LOCKER'S "LONDON LYRICS"



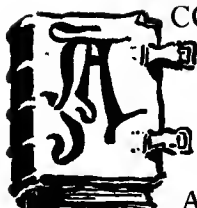
HE poet sings of other girls,
Of other modes, and other fashions;
His loves wore crinolines and curls,
Had vapours too, and doubtless,
passions.

'Tis plain he does not rhyme of you—
I do it, in and out of season,—
But, then, you see, he never knew;
And I have known—and that's the reason.

But take the book, and, when 'tis read,
If any verse seem fine or pretty,
Think so would I of you have said,
If I were he or half as witty.

TO HER

WITH A BOOK OF VERSES



ACCEPT this book of poesie
Which quaintly pictures you and
me

In various different guises.
There I as Launcelot appear
And you as stately Guenevere
The world with grace surprises.

For know, my love, the names but lie,
'Tis ever only you and I
That wander through the pages,
And more—to me in “Noman’s Land”
We two have wandered hand in hand
It seems for countless ages.

And so, dear sweetheart, if you will
Throughout *this* land we’ll wander still,
Come fair or stormy weather,
O’er beetling crag, thro’ sunny dale,
Until we reach the “darksome vale,”
Two friends grown old together.

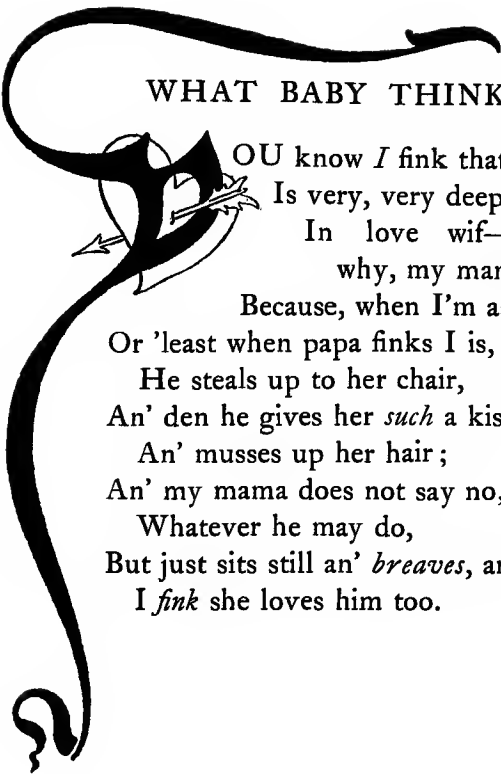


TO ARAMINTA

WITH FITZGERALD'S RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

ACCEPT these Rubáiyát of Wine
and Song
And gentle Love by Omar writ-
ten long
Ere Thou on Earth "with shining Foot"
didst tread,
An Angel 'midst the unconsidered Throng.

And if Thou findest there that "old Khayyám,"
Neglecting Love and Song, o'erpraise His
Dram,
Remember then how long before Thy Rise
The luckless Poet made His last Salaam.



WHAT BABY THINKS

YOU know *I* fink that my papa
Is very, very deep
In love wif—guess!—
why, my mama!
Because, when I'm asleep,
Or 'least when papa finks I is,
He steals up to her chair,
An' den he gives her *such* a kiss!
An' musses up her hair;
An' my mama does not say no,
Whatever he may do,
But just sits still an' *breaves*, an' so
I *fink* she loves him too.

TO MY DAUGHTER PHYLLIS—1893

MY dear, as you lie kicking there,
I wonder who will find you
fair,
And rave at length about
your hair—

(A downy fluff at present)
And if your voice will ever thrill
A lover's soul, or sweetly fill
A music-room—I find it shrill
And far from pleasant.

You certainly have “cunning” toes,
But ankles!—surely, dearest, those
Fat, creasy things, which you disclose
With freedom shocking,
Cannot by any magic be
Seedlings of that which charmeth me
Where'er by some good luck I see
Your mother's stocking.

I pray that you may “grow in grace,”
That *features* may adorn your face,
That sense and beauty may keep pace
With one another

In your small entity, and still
Increase, if by God's wiser will,
You may be spared to live, until
You're like your mother.



“TO BETTY” —1897

BETTY, mistress of my soul,
Wealth of Ind were worthless
chaff
Sans thy inimitably droll :
“Me laugh !”

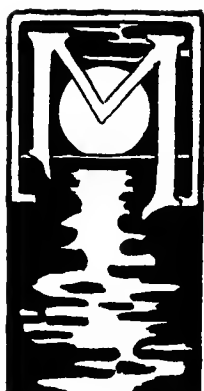
In her voice a cordial lies,
Which, who knew her stintless quaff,
When with dimples Betty cries :
“Me laugh !”

Care before these words takes wing ;
Fortune, heedless of thy gaff,
Prodded I with Betty sings :
“Me laugh !”

Betty, when I, growing old,
Lean upon thee for my staff,
Ne'er forget those words of gold :
“Me laugh !”

Never lose thy merry soul ;
Mirth is grain, and sorrow chaff ;
Meet misfortune with thy droll
“Me laugh !”

BON VOYAGE



OST everything's been said
or sung
By some more sweet or facile
tongue,
That's worth the saying,
So now, that, lying off the
strand,
Your ship, ere setting can-
vas and
Her anchor weighing,

Awaits until the gong be heard,
And that you ask a parting word
Of this attorney,
What can a musty lawyer say
Save wish you in his *driest* way
A pleasant journey !

“WHENCE COMES FEAR?”



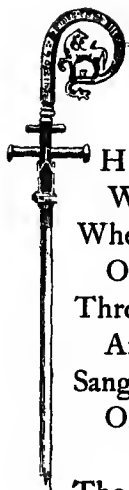
HE thunder rolled portentous,
Down the hillside through the
glade,
And my darling little daughter,
Said: “Father, I’m afraid.”

Then I told her the old legend
Of Hudson and his men,
And how they played at tenpins
Up the mountain in the glen.

And how the grumbling thunder
Was of the balls they bowled,
And how the splitting crashes
Their mighty ten-strikes told.

But after I had finished
As the lightning rent the sky,
She cowered low and whimpered:
“I’m afraid!—I’d like to cry.”

Then I marvelled at her fearing,
She, who’d never felt the rod,
Could it be she knew, and trembled
At the awful voice of God?



PEACE

JULY, 1897

HE hand of Death yet grasping its rod,
Was upheld o'er the stricken place
Where the voice, as it were an angel of God,
Of a boy with a seraph's face
Through the air, all heavy with lilies dead,
And a sorrow which must increase,
Sang straight to our hearts, our hearts that bled,
Of peace—of perfect peace.

The black-stoled priests, from the chancel gone,
Precede the bier to the grave,
Yet still that exquisite voice alone,
Rings sweet through the groined nave,
And the boy in the light of the oriel stands
Till the chastened footfalls cease,
And sings to his God o'er his claspéd hands
Of peace—of perfect peace.



A DEDICATION

EAR Phyllis, if thus far you've read
I doubt me much you shake your
head,

And wonder whether
I be a Mormon in disguise,
Since for so many maids my sighs
I've bound together :

If so, you have not read a bit
Between the lines, and all your wit
Misserves you, Phyllis,
For know that you and only you
Are meant by "Celia," "Chloe," "Prue,"
And "Amaryllis.



